

Remarks

The above claim amendments were made to correct certain informalities. These amendments were not made to traverse an art rejection of the claims in the outstanding Office Action because the claims as originally filed are patentable over the art of record.

The present application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 21, 2000 and an interview with the Examiner on April 27, 2000. In the Office Action, the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent 5,977,978 to Carey ("Carey"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants also wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy and assistance extended to Applicants' Attorney during the telephone interview on April 27, 2000. During the interview independent claim 1 and Carey were discussed, and an agreement was reached that claim 1 as originally filed defined patentable subject matter over Carey. An Interview Summary dated May 4, 2000, provides one feature of claim 1 that is not disclosed or suggested in Carey. However, Applicants submit that the claims define patentable subject matter for reasons in addition to those set forth in the Interview Summary.

Based on the above, independent claims 1, 10, 14, and 20 are believed to be in condition for allowance. The various groupings of dependent claims, specifically claims 2-9, 11-13, 15-19, and 21-25, depend from independent claims 1, 10, 14, and 20, respectively, and are also believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the art rejection of the claims are respectfully requested.

Newly added claims 26-33 incorporate similar features as claim 1 through 25 which have been examined. It is submitted that no new matter has been added, and these claims are in condition for allowance as least for the reasons set forth above.



Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

Enclosed is a PETITION FOR 2-MONTH EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER 35 C.F.R. 1.136 for extending the time to respond up to and including today, June 21, 2000.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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